

SPECIAL TRIBUTE

A week ago, when we learned 19 elite firefighters died battling the Yarnell Hill wildfire, our shock was profound. By Monday afternoon, our shock gave way to action. We recognized the grief consuming those families, their hometowns, the larger firefighting community. We understood that it wasn't our grief. We knew we couldn't carry the burden of their sadness or take on the pain of their loss. But we could come together as a statewide family and take responsibility for their healing, and we could unite to hasten their recovery. We lugged water to collection points. We donated money on the Internet and in person. We lined the roads, hands over hearts, as

the caravan carried the bodies of 19 men down to Phoenix. We mourned, publicly and privately. We prayed for the people who loved those men, that they would be comforted by the strength of 6 million Arizonans. In these actions, through this generosity of spirit, we honor the lives of those brave 19 and hope to ease the recovery of their loved ones and community. We show the nation what it means to be Arizonans; we show each other what it means to be family. Via social media, we reached out to friends, neighbors and family who share these sentiments. We asked them to complete this sentence: "We are Arizona because" These are their words. — Megan Finnerty

To download a copy of this tribute page, go to [living.azcentral.com](#). See readers' photo tributes, E3.

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Arizona Strong! • Stand together! • We are one!!!!!! • Stand behind our own • Love our country! • We are iron because iron sharpens iron! • Honor our heroes! • The Phoenix explains Arizona! • We hurt together, we console, we love our neighbors and we are a big family • We are family, a bond that holds tight and takes care of one another in times of need! FAMILY equals LOVE!! • We are proud of our service people: firemen, policemen, armed forces and volunteers. RIP the 19 Heroes • Endure and recover as a community • Persist and push ahead through the grief getting the job done • Unite and come together in the face of adversity • Because we support each other when things get tuff, we get tuffer amen • We believe in ourselves, our state and our country • Our strength, caring and concern for one another shines brightly on good days and in bad • WE ARE ALL ONE HUGE FAMILY!! • We are patriotic, stand as one and when one falls we stand tall and honor them for their bravery... RIP 19 hot shot crew • Care about ourselves and our neighbors • Arizonans are strong, faithful and very patriotic! • We won't be defeated, ever • We carry the spirit of pioneers, we overcome challenges by standing strong together • We come together, from Yuma to Bullhead City, from Kayenta to Willcox, and every town in between — together, we feel a common pride in knowing the courage our neighbors displayed in the worst of times. We all feel the deep sorrow, from corner to corner, in knowing their lives were too short — all because of their passion and desire to do good things for others. We are Arizona because we are proud and humbled by those around us • We care for our fellow Arizonans • Our love and care for each other is greater than the Grand Canyon • We love our state and we honor each other, even when we don't agree on everything. We are the very definition of strength — especially when we are forced to face loss that takes our very breath away • We never quit and we never give into threats and intimidation because we believe in doing what is right • Although we may have friendly competition between cities when the chips are down the cities all pull together to help one another ... Arizonans are the best! • We share the pain, the loss of our fellow Arizonans, our fellow Americans. Cut one and we bleed together. God Bless The Yarnell 19, their loved ones and the people of Yarnell • People have to be strong to survive here and in small communities you look after one another through fire and flood because Arizona is beautiful but wild too and therein lies her attraction! • When the going gets tough, we get tougher and come out stronger • We Stick Together thru Thick & Thin ... Good Times & Bad ... Triumph & Tragedy!! • Big city or small town, we care for our neighbors. Through good times and bad we know to some extent what each other is going through. And though hell seems to rage around us at times, we are determined to make our AZ family come through stronger and better • I had the honor of having Grant Quinn McKee walk in my life at a challenging time for both of us. He was my son Mason's roommate in Prescott and had to be the one to call me with some very bad news. Grant was wise beyond his years and I called him my gift from God. He was my son's age and held my hand through a heartbreaking time in my life. He was my hero. He touched my life and I will never forget him. ... God must have really needed him • Our strength comes from Faith Diversity and a Welcoming Spirit • We are family • True grit, that's what we're made of • We're united and we give support to each other • We help each other. ... This is a community that help first and never ask questions. We are genuinely a loving helpful community • Godspeed to our 19 heroes • We live in the Land of the Free and The Home of the (19) Brave. God Bless America. God Bless Arizona! God Bless our 19 Brave • We have endured so much and we are still here ... fighting the fight!!! • We rise when situations are hard ... we become ONE FAMILY ... to help ... support and be there for one another in time of need ... near or far ... that's what WE ARIZONA family does ... WE BECOME ONE • We are the true representation of what our forefathers intended. We are America • We support each other at all times • It's all walks of life that come to Arizona and make us the strong state we are • Strong, dedicated, and willing to move forward through any circumstances • I am from Wickenburg, Arizona. Everyone in my hometown is either related to or knows someone who was affected by this fire. I am proud of my community • Even though we have the fifth largest city in nation, we still have the small-town camaraderie • Whether government or nature pushes us we band together and become stronger • Arizonans are the epitome of endurance! • Come from all over the country and world to live here! We make Arizona home and try to make everyone who has left home to move here feel welcome. God bless the Southwest and America! • We shine as Bright as the Sun & Our Stripes & even the stars in a Dark Night as we follow the Light ... in Unity • Caring people who all pitch in to help in the wake of tragedy • We are strong we will recover, they are gone but not forgotten • Compassionate • Are shiny happy people full of love and joy for all!



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MY SO-CALLED MIDLIFE

Karina Bland's column will return next week.

REACH US

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